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Anti-castism and misplaced nativism

Mapping caste as an aspect of race

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From September 2013 to February 2014 I led a project on 'Caste in Britain' for the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).^{*} It culminated in two research reports.¹ The remit of the project was, first, to review existing socio-legal research on British equality law and caste, and, second, to conduct two supporting events with the aim of bringing together interdisciplinary expertise and a range of stakeholder views on caste, and discrimination on the basis of caste, in the UK. In April 2013, MPs and peers had voted in both Houses of Parliament to enact the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill, Section 97 of which requires government to introduce a statutory prohibition of caste discrimination into British equality law by making caste an aspect of the protected characteristic of race in the Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010).² Following direction by the government, the EHRC contracted a team of academics from different universities, led by me, to carry out an independent study on caste in Britain. We set out to identify concerns and common ground in relation to the implementation of the statutory prohibition on caste discrimination in advance of and in anticipation of the required secondary legislation that will make caste 'an aspect of race' in the EA 2010.

The research for the project, particularly in fulfilment of its second aim of garnering stakeholder views, was quite challenging due to the range of opinions and heightened sensitivities of both the pro-legislation and the anti-legislation organizations whom we brought face to face in a day-long workshop. It took all my skills as a philosopher (listening, arguing, clarifying, mediating, tracking truth and ensuring fairness) to generate an environment for a sustained exchange of views between

divergent opinions – from the extreme right wing to the extreme left wing – interspersed with perspectives of a medley of some very seasoned and other rather new campaigners, not versed in any definite political tendency, but pragmatically open to any party that supported their particular pro- or anti-legislation stance.³ The political multi-logue enacted on the day was fed by many conversational streams and continues in various ways in different forums. Among the academic experts we invited the range of opinions was narrower than at the stakeholders' workshop; nonetheless, it included a comparable variety of positions of support for legislation on the one extreme and scepticism about the use of law on the other, inflected with varying degrees of political self-consciousness.

The manner of inclusion of caste as an aspect of race in equality law is not yet settled; the outcome of continuing conversations between stakeholders is as yet unpredictable. In this article I will highlight some extralegal difficulties in mapping caste as an aspect of race and point out the pernicious role played by the ethos of multiculturalism in exacerbating these difficulties. Multiculturalism occludes the processes of becoming 'different', by naturalizing difference as pre-given. In the context of the experience of what I will call 'casteism' the effect of multiculturalism is to layer denial upon denial. To track truth in such circumstances requires attending to the exchanges between multiple 'other' voices

One such voice was an academic lawyer of Gujarati Indian background, teaching in a prestigious university in the UK, who, by the time we invited him, had recorded, through his blogs, an opposition to the inclusion of caste in the EA 2010.

^{*}This article is a revised version of a paper presented to the UK Society for Women in Philosophy conference, 'Philosophy and Other Voices', University of Essex, 27–28 March 2015.

He uses the framework of legal pluralism. The blogger writes:

When discussing caste and, more seriously, when legislating on it, a series of confusions occurs about what we are talking of and what we are aiming to do. The emotions stirred by the issue of caste, and a measure of self-righteousness, have a role to play in shaping the level of the discussion but, more critically, there is confusion as between Indian senses of caste and Western understandings of it.... When discussing caste, many Indians too speak as if they operate from within the Western framework.

Here is the charge of Orientalism against us. First, that we are imposing a Western frame on an Indian reality, which cannot be captured within it. Second, that caste is not what it appears to us, and we are mistaken in making it the object of legislation. And third, that we are 'emotional' rather than 'critical' about it. These charges are further built upon in subsequent posts four months after the publication of our reports in a long response signed by a number of Hindu organizations, including the Alliance of Hindu Organizations, Anti-Caste Legislation Committee, British Hindu Voice, City Hindus Network, Coalition for Dialogue, Hindu Lawyers Association, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK), National Council of Hindu Temples (UK), National Hindu Students Forum (UK), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK), and Nitin Mehta.⁴ A snippet reads thus:

The idea that Indian society is composed of a caste system is based on Christian representations of Indian society and culture, which were taken up by Orientalists and contemporary social scientists who assumed their truth. The idea of a caste system was created because of the frustration of Christian missionaries who decided that Brahmins, who they typified as the 'priests' of the Hindu religion, were responsible for the failure of their efforts to convert Indians to Christianity. The idea of the caste system is therefore directly linked to Christian conversion efforts in India.⁵

Here a further accusation is added: that our alleged Orientalism is not only an epistemic drawback but is also suspicious for serving an imagined political purpose – that of furthering Christian conversion efforts in India.

In October 2014, as the chair of Coalition for Dialogue, the same academic raises a scare about the implication of the proposed legislation for business. Repeating the argument about the Orientalist construction of caste, he concludes:

Our assessment is that judges will be all too ready on the basis of alleged facts to assume that caste discrimination is made out. ... Europeans invariably bring up the caste system when they are conversing with Indians. Judges, who are also educated within the same cultural milieu, will not be immune to such stereotyping. This effectively lowers the applicable balance-of-probabilities standard of proof, and the burden of proof will be upon the South Asian employer, business, professional, other service provider or senior employee to defend themselves against what will effectively be a *[sic]* that caste discrimination has occurred. This exposes South Asians and their businesses to further discrimination in the operation of the law and ... disadvantages them in being able to insure against caste-based claims.⁶

In the last blog entry, the fear of racism emerges with full force. Judges too, it is feared, will be unable to escape an Orientalist mindset that sees a problem in a benign social identity. In sum, as report writers, we are being accused of exposing South Asian businesses to a new possibility for racist stereotyping, should the government follow our recommendation in the manner of instituting the statutory secondary legislation to make caste an aspect of race in the EA 2010.

Is this charge of Orientalism defensible? The first part of this article will address this question through a brief historical exploration of the caste system and of opposition to it. It is followed, in the second part, by the examination of a connected question: if caste is an indeterminate concept, does it follow that legislation against caste discrimination is not defensible?

The bugbear of Orientalism and precolonial caste

The problem I want to raise here is not about the general state of philosophy and how we have unquestionably failed to bring colour to our curriculum. It is rather about the dangers of misunderstanding that we, the excluded people of colour, face when we raise our critical voices. We point out the ways in which our 'communities' are divided by differences that ought to be removed, but we end up bringing those differences into sharper relief, and introduce greater fissures than existed before. Mainstream curricula can be enlarged by adding mainstream 'others' or by adding 'others' among those 'others'. Perhaps this tension is how it should be. There can be no cosmetic solution to the inclusion of cultures with deep-rooted divisions within them, not least because of the slipperiness of the 'cultures' within which differences get manifested: 'Culture alive is always on

the run, always changeable', as Spivak writes. Cosmetic solutions of the multiculturalist variety, accommodating differences through so-called 'dialogue', are also complicated when deeper interests are served by keeping some differences in place. As students of 'cultural politics' we can join Spivak in asking: 'In what interest are differences defined?'⁷ Such a question should take us to another level, beyond individual intentional behaviour correctible through personal appeals.

Attempting to unmask the many faces of prejudice using the available resources within our discipline finds the vocabulary insufficient, the concepts missing. Even so, I will try to answer the first question that the blogger's attack generates. Put in a different way: am I being an Orientalist in using the vocabulary of 'caste' to name the experiences of humiliation, prejudice and discrimination that many of my Dalit respondents report?

There are competing intellectual histories of the idea of 'caste', which has been compared to 'race' in different ways. I will briefly outline these histories and consider a conceptual comparison of 'caste' and 'caste identity' with 'race' and 'race identity'. I shall leave aside the legal elements of the comparison, and instead focus on the phenomenology of caste developed through my ethnographic research over the last eight years, and offer further suggestions towards the conceptual understanding of caste identity that I haltingly began in 1993.⁸ In this undertaking I find a fellow traveller in the person of Uma Narayan, professor of philosophy in the USA, whose refusal to take the 'emissary position' in Western contexts is both astute and brave. She knows full well that her feminist writings critical of Indian social practices can 'be represented as anti-nationalist or anticomunity betrayals that collude with negative "Western views" about Third-World contexts'.⁹ Yet, fully armed with her critical insights, she fights the uncritical nationalist's reprimands on the one hand and the Western feminist's 'condescending form of moral paternalism' on the other. Western feminists, sensitized to the erasure of 'Otherness', in their sisterly concern warn her that she might 'reinforce Western stereotypes about Indian culture' in her manner of revealing uncomfortable truths about the undeniable presence of misogynistic social practices within Indian culture. The western feminists' advocacy of caution doubly excludes the excluded – first by placing the excluded as 'different', then by restricting the excluded from opening up differences within 'difference'.

The central pursuits of the discipline of philosophy are largely dictated by the concerns of the privileged insiders. Our subject neglects taking up uncomfortable questions from the vantage point of the excluded. Philosophy as such is predominantly an upper-class (upper-caste) male discipline and the Western philosophical canon is white. Even as lip service is paid to the impression Eastern philosophies may have made on some European thinkers (for example, Schopenhauer), what is taught in academic departments is a selection of texts by white Western philosophers. The learning and teaching of the subject is done without critical reflection on how our ways of thinking may have suffered as a result of such a restricted diet. As Charles Mills puts it: 'Most Western philosophers have been white and have taken their racial standing for granted, not seeing how it enters into their identity and affects their relationship with the universe.'¹⁰ We could slightly modify this statement to say that 'Most Indian philosophers have been upper-caste and have taken their caste standing for granted, not seeing how it enters into their identity and affects their relationship with the universe.' And this would not be an effect of Orientalism, but of Brahmanism, which Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956) made it his life's mission to dismantle. Ambedkar was uncompromising and scathing in his criticisms, with no superficial attempt to keep peace with those he criticized.

With a surname (Dhanda) found among Dalits and non-Dalits, my situation is one of complicated positionality – of complicity (through 'upper-caste' family privilege) and resistance (as anti-caste feminist) inextricably coupled together. I assume that there is no 'pure' opposition possible to any system of oppression or marginalization. Orientalism is a real enemy, but the blogger misidentifies its location within anti-castism espoused by academics trained within 'western frameworks' of thought. And by making caste identity appear a benign phenomenon 'misunderstood' by Orientalists his own stance is one of a misplaced 'nativism' that de facto reinforces the hierarchical status quo.

The blogger's nativism, the clinging to an 'Indian' sense of caste occluded by a 'Western' sense, emerges from a sharp division between the West and the 'rest'. Chetan Bhatt, in a different vein from Spivak, provides an intellectual historiography of the bifurcation between East and West initiated by Voltaire, taken forward by Herder through Hegel to Schopenhauer.¹¹ The blogger has adopted the East/West bifurcation but ignores the praise Western philosophers, accused

of Orientalism, reserved for the ‘immortalizing’ philosophies of the East.¹² That these philosophies are subject to thoroughgoing ethico-legal criticism by insiders, such as in the criticism made of the philosophy of Hinduism by Ambedkar, is also conveniently ignored.

A Dalit by birth, a scholarship student of John Dewey at Columbia, Ambedkar read Nietzsche and juxtaposed him to Manu, the lawgiver. He writes in *Philosophy of Hinduism*:

Thus Spake Zarathustra is a new addition of *Manu Smṛiti*. If there is any difference between Manu and Nietzsche it lies in this. Nietzsche was genuinely interested in creating a new race of men which will be supermen as compared with the existing race of men. Manu on the other hand was interested in maintaining the privileges of a class who had come to arrogate to itself the claim of being supermen ... Nietzsche’s supermen were supermen by reason of their worth, Manu’s supermen were supermen by reason of their birth.... Manu’s is a degraded and degenerate philosophy of superman as compared with that of Nietzsche and therefore far more odious and loathsome than the philosophy of Nietzsche.¹³

Much can be cited from the *Manusmṛiti* that shows contempt towards labourers (the Shudra). But some Hindus, particularly followers of the Arya Samaj, a reformist sect from Northern India, would want to differ with Ambedkar on the centrality of this text in the lived experience of Hindus. The Indian philosopher and Statesman S. Radhakrishnan chose the *Upaniṣads* as the definitive texts containing the essence of Hinduism, with clear acceptance of the supremacy of the Brahmin (*Brāhmaṇa*), but allowing some questioning about who counts as a Brahmin. *Vajrasūcika Upaniṣad*, included in his compilation *The Principal Upaniṣads*, directly addresses the question thus:

The Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra are the four classes (castes). That the Brāhmaṇa is the chief among these classes is in accord with the Vedic texts and is affirmed by the Smṛtis. In this connection there is a point worthy of investigation. Who is verily, the Brāhmaṇa? Is he the individual soul [*kim jivaḥ?*] Is he the body [*kim dehaḥ?*] Is he the class based on birth [*kim jātiḥ?*] Is he the knowledge? Is he the deeds (previous, present or prospective)? Is he the performer of the rites?¹⁴

The remainder of the *Vajrasūcika Upaniṣad* gives reasons to answer each of the questions about the identity of the Brāhmaṇa in the negative – he is not

the soul, not the body, not the birth-ascribed class, not holder of knowledge, not the performer of rites – and concludes that the Brāhmaṇa is only identifiable by his qualities. He must be

rid of the faults of desire, attachment, etc., and endowed with the qualities of tranquillity, etc., rid of the states of being, spite, greed, expectation, bewilderment, etc., with his mind unaffected by ostentation, self-sense and the like, he lives. He alone who is possessed of these qualities is the Brāhmaṇa. This is the view of the Vedic texts and tradition, ancient lore and history. The accomplishment of the state of the Brāhmaṇa is otherwise impossible.¹⁵

Taking this idealized definition of a Brāhmaṇa, no one could be a Brāhmaṇa by birth, and most would fail the accomplishment test, which is supposedly open to anyone to aspire to. It is this interpretation that the deniers of the caste hierarchy in the Hindu tradition have in mind. Indeed Radhakrishnan comments at the end of the text that ‘It is valuable to recall the teaching of this Upaniṣad which repudiates the system that consecrates inequalities and hardens contingent differences into inviolable divisions’.¹⁶ For Radhakrishnan the inequality between a Brāhmaṇa and a Śūdra as particular individuals is merely contingent, which a ‘system’ converts into rigid divisions. This leaves open the intellectual possibility of imagining away the systematic differences between the two, an appealing option for the deniers.

The first problem with this approach is that it does not place the Brāhmaṇa as a member of a group, with identifiable and exclusive symbols of group membership, including privileged access to the language of ritual, place of residence, occupation and even codes of dress. If, as the anthropologist G.D. Berreman notes, ‘where group affiliation is relevant, individual attributes are irrelevant’,¹⁷ then the exit option provided by the Upaniṣads of denying ritual status to a Brāhmaṇa who lacks the requisite accomplishments of a true Brāhmaṇa is a chimera. The status ascription, tied as it is to group membership not to individual attributes, cannot be shaken by merely pointing out individual failings. However, if and when Brāhmaṇas were to decline in importance as a group, due to other reasons, then pointing out individual failings may work to dislodge the superior status accorded to an individual Brāhmaṇa by participants in the system.

The second problem with the intellectualizing approach is that it does not answer why ordinary people, Hindus and non-Hindus alike, are not

impressed by the idealized definition of a Brāhmaṇa and continue to take the four Varnas as birth-ascribed? The answer perhaps lies in the influence of other texts – *Manusmriti* (the Law Book of Manu) and *Bhagwat Gita*, a text that forms an undeniably central part in the daily incantations of many Hindus.

Ambedkar shows that the *Bhagwat Gita* incorporates *Manusmriti*'s division of society into four *Varna* (sections) underpinned by inequality: '*Gita* is Manu in a nutshell'. The Hindu deity Lord Krishna says in the *Gita*: 'I myself have created the arrangement known as Chaturvarna (i.e. the fourfold division of society into four castes Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyaa and Shudras) assigning them different occupations in accordance with the native capacities ... *Gita*. IV. 13'; 'There is bliss in following the occupation of one's own varna, even if death were to result in performing it ... *Gita*. III. 35.'¹⁸ Further, as Ambedkar argues, the *Gita* gave a new lease of life to *Varna*, which 'would have otherwise petered away', precisely by providing 'a philosophical foundation to the *Varna* system by arguing that the *Varna* was based on the innate qualities of man'.¹⁹

M.K. Gandhi (1869–1948) spoke in favour of *Varna*, and thus entered into a bitter dispute with Ambedkar. For Gandhi, 'hereditary occupation' is 'the soul of the caste system. ... To change it is to create disorder.' He wrote in his Gujrati journal: 'The caste system is a natural order of society ... I am opposed to all those who are out to destroy the caste system.'²⁰ In his *Varnavyavastha* Gandhi defends hereditary occupations thus: 'The object of the *Varna* system is to prevent competition and class struggle and class war. I believe in the *Varna* system because it fixes the duties and occupations of persons'; '*Varna* means

the determination of a man's occupation before he is born'²¹ and also that 'everyone shall follow as a matter of dharma – duty – the hereditary calling of his forefathers, in so far as it is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics.'²²

Outside the *Chaturvarna*, there is a fifth category, the *avarna*, referred to by various terms – *caṇḍālā* ('outcastes' in the *Upaniṣads*), *Harijan* ('children of God' by M.K. Gandhi), Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes (in the Indian Constitution) and *dalit* (in contemporary political discourse). The word 'Dalit' emerged as a political term of self-identification in the 1970s but may be regarded as offensive by some to whom it is applied because of the painful histories of subordination and humiliation that it recalls. 'To call oneself Dalit, meaning "ground down", "broken to pieces", "crushed" is to convert a negative description into a confrontational identity.'²³

From Ambedkar's critique of the *Philosophy of Hinduism*, we can identify one startling respect in which the impact of the *Manusmriti* is in evidence today in everyday 'lived experience'. This is in the practice of naming a Hindu child. Ambedkar explains that Manu gives directions as to what the first and second parts of the temporal name of a Hindu should denote:

The second part of a Brahman's name shall be a word implying happiness, of a Kshatriya's a word implying protection; of a Vaishya's a term expressive of prosperity and of a Shudra's an expression denoting service. Accordingly the Brahmans have *Sharma* (happiness) or *Deva* (god), the Kshtrayas have *Raja* (authority) or *Verma* (armour), the Vaishayas have *Gupta* (gifts) or *Datta* (giver) and the Shudras have *Das* (service) for the second part of their names. As to the first part of their names ... in the case of a Shudra, Manu says the first part of his name should denote something contemptible!!²⁴

Attention to the names of South Asians can give one a fairly good idea of the 'caste' of the person.²⁵ However, given several other complicating factors in acquiring names – place of birth to feudal associations – there is of course no foolproof method of deducing the caste of a person from their name. Ambedkar's point in drawing attention to the *Manusmriti*'s recommendation is to show how deeply ingrained its teachings are. The deniers of caste hierarchy may want to pull out a little-known *Upaniṣad* (cited above) for support, but we simply have to look at our naming practices to accept the veracity of Ambedkar's claim that the *Manusmriti* has been influential in directing our lives.²⁶



Ambedkar's belongings

Returning to the charge that the British imposed a Western model for understanding the supposedly benign phenomena of caste affiliation, which was essentially fluid, we need to look at pre-colonial times. It is undeniable that some consolidation of “traditional” India took place under British rule, but, as the historian Nicholas Dirks succinctly states, “The assumption that the colonial state could manipulate and invent Indian tradition at will, creating a new form of caste and reconstituting the social, and that a study of its own writings and discourse is sufficient to argue such a case, is clearly inadequate and largely wrong.”²⁷ The suggestion that caste was not invidious because in pre-colonial India it was in a sense eclectic is to betray one’s distance from the writings of indigenous reformers of medieval India, who forcefully enlighten us about the blight of caste.²⁸ Indeed there are many historical examples of pre-colonial protests against caste. In the Introduction to a new edition of Ambedkar’s key text, *Annihilation of Caste*,²⁹ Arundhati Roy lists some of these: ‘In the mid-twelfth century, the Veerashaivas led by Basave challenged caste in South India, and were crushed. From the fourteenth century onwards, the beloved Bhakti poet saints – Cokhamela, Ravidas, Kabir, Tukaram, Mira, Janabai – became and still remain the poets of the anticaste tradition.’³⁰ She does not add the Sikh Gurus to this list. There are numerous lines in *Shri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS)*, the sacred text of the Sikhs, with clear challenges to caste hierarchy, and caste-induced pride/honour, *jāī-paī*.³¹

The limitation, though, is that these challenges do not grapple with the socio-political disabilities that stem from caste, but offer spiritual equality as an antidote to caste prejudice. This limitation of equality to the sacred realm renders the Sikh response to caste prejudice limited in its effect to this day. Within the sacred space of the Gurudwara, equality is preached but outside this space inequality returns with a vengeance. Our point in listing these medieval protests to caste, limited though they may be, is to establish that well before the British set foot in India caste divisions were challenged by revolutionary poets, saints and seers. Caste or *Jati* was never benign. It was felt as a burden to be overthrown. A precursor of Ambedkar, Jotiba Phule (1826–1890), decried the caste system as ‘the code of crude and inhuman laws to which we can find no parallel among other nations’.³²

This part of our pre-colonial history also shows that ideas of equality stirred the minds of Indians well before the colonial encounter and did not spring

for the first time from Christian missionary activities. The blogger is mistaken in thinking otherwise. Indeed one could argue that these pre-existing ideas of equality, coupled with their incongruent socio-economic realization, made the victims of castism receptive to the colonizers’ offer of legal equality in the latter period of colonization. The blogger’s nativism is misplaced for the further reason that he underestimates the cultural resources of the Indic civilization – whilst spawning inequality it also produced elements of an antidote.

Caste continues to be seen as a birth-ascribed status, and, even though historical ties to occupations have loosened for those who accept the religious hierarchical order, caste is still connected to ritual purity/pollution. It combines elements of social class, hierarchy and privilege sustained by endogamy (marrying restricted within a group). There is undoubtedly a fluidity in the way people follow caste-based prescriptions; some even give them up altogether, sometimes with grave personal costs. I have gathered some evidence of rebellious anti-caste liaisons in my recent work on runaway marriages in the Punjab.³³ Further, in the Indian context caste stratifications maybe regionally variable. Nonetheless, caste invariably denotes constraints, and in the case of those in the lower sections it spells deprivation, atrocities, violence and discrimination. Caste divisions are tied to unequal access to valued resources. Humiliation of certain groups considered socially inferior is routine; even as rebellion grows against such treatment, it is often met with a violent response. Gopal Guru’s moving studies *Humiliation* and *The Cracked Mirror* argues forcefully that reflection on experience, rather than ungrounded abstraction, ought to be the basis of social scientific theorizing.³⁴

Caste as a confrontational identity, symbolized in the self-ascription of the term ‘Dalit’, is quite different from non-Dalit caste identifications, supposedly from a non-confrontational and non-hierarchical perspective. This perspective on caste, viewing it as a harmless identity, has been recently suggested as a theoretical alternative³⁵ to Louise Dumont’s structuralist understanding of caste as fundamentally about *hierarchy*. This new understanding has been criticized as the ‘culturalization of caste’, a phrase coined by Balmurli Natarajan, who perspicuously describes it as a ‘counter-revolution’ whereby the project of annihilation of caste is derailed, and caste identity is accommodated within a multicultural celebration of ‘difference’. The hidden politics of this counter-revolution is the normalization of the ‘pretension

that caste is not about antagonistic, exploitative or oppressive relations³⁶ which require politico-legal interventions. Ambedkar's message that caste must be annihilated, by using legal means if necessary, has neither been heard nor heeded by these new defenders of caste identity in its purportedly non-confrontational, celebratory mode.

Conceptual indeterminacy and the phenomenology of caste

We can now ask our second question: if caste is an indeterminate concept, does it follow that legislation against caste discrimination is not defensible? The view we took in our research report was that we must pay attention to the manifestation of caste. Its 'meaning' must be gleaned from how people experience caste. The point may now be developed as follows. Even if the meaning of caste is indeterminate – that is, even if it means one thing to one group and something else to another, if it is considered hurt-inducing by some and joy-inducing by others – the concern of the law is with the behaviour that emerges from the beliefs about caste. If there are identifiable patterns of behaviour that spring from the belief 'as if' caste has the fixed meaning of superiority of some when compared to others, then it makes sense to address such casteist behaviour as a systematic expression of caste prejudice. Thus, even though caste is an indeterminate concept, legislation on the basis of caste is defensible.

Focusing on the experience of caste, in a pilot study on the conversion of Dalits to Buddhism and Christianity in Wolverhampton, I found that caste is felt as a permanent, deeply embedded cultural tradition and that conversion does not leave caste behind. Bitter, visceral and emotive language is used to describe caste: it is 'a monster', 'a disease'; 'It sticks'. Among the converts, there is powerlessness in relation to caste: it is something 'done to you' that you are 'lumbered with'.³⁷ Dalits choose to convert, attempting to escape caste by adopting religious traditions doctrinally opposed to casteism, but in the eyes of the 'upper-caste' these converts remain 'lower-caste'. Caste manifests in the education sector in Britain, in bullying and name-calling;³⁸ it surfaces in religious practice in Gurdwaras, for example in the reluctance to allow Valmiki – a Dalit caste grouping who have collectively dropped their caste name to adopt a religious label as followers of sage Valmiki – 'to distribute *karah prashad*'.³⁹ It manifests in the workplace with the example of those from the 'higher caste' refusing to take orders from

'lower caste' managers.⁴⁰ Recent reported incidents of caste discrimination in the UK that emerged at the seminars I organized as a part of the Caste in Britain project included caste stereotyping used to undercut business, sexual harassment in the workplace, and the refusal of taxi service on finding out the caste status of passengers. Many of these examples⁴¹ suggest patterns of behaviour that would become actionable under discrimination law, when caste is made an aspect of race. Research on recent Nepali migrants to Oxfordshire shows evidence of 'active revival of caste' manifest in 'residential patterns' bordering on Untouchability.⁴² Through marriage, education and networking, this cycle of new migrants continues to reproduce the pattern of 'diasporal elites utilizing and profiting from an immigrant underclass', suggesting 'a need to consider the range of experiences mediated by caste and gender as well as the potential for exploitation'.⁴³

If legislation against caste discrimination is thus defensible, what can we learn from a comparative perspective on race and caste? In a seminar in London in 1966 on Caste and Race: Comparative Approaches, it was noted that the caste system comprised 'groups', 'discrete, bounded, ranked entities' and 'a system of institutionalized inequality';⁴⁴ interestingly, the French structuralist Louise Dumont urged that the point of the comparative approach was to 'rediscover hierarchy' in order to throw light on 'the dark corners of our own society'.⁴⁵ For G.D. Berreman, caste systems are 'always in disequilibrium, like pots of water on fire, always threatening to boil over. They are characterized not by consensus but by conformity. They are maintained not by agreement but by sanctions'.⁴⁶ This reiterates Ambedkar's observation that 'No one who knows anything about the *Manu Smriti* can say that the caste system is a natural system. What does *Manu Smriti* show? It shows that the caste system is a legal system maintained at the point of a bayonet'.⁴⁷

Berreman criticizes the tendency among those who study and analyse caste systems to idealize or intellectualize caste. 'Caste is people ... interacting in characteristic ways ... a caste system is a pattern of human relationships and it is a state of mind'.⁴⁸ Most importantly, it was noted in a way that is still relevant today that even though there may be disequilibrium, the system persists through change. Regardless of the inconclusive theoretical debates on its meaning, caste continues to be vividly present in the experiential realm, sometimes just below the surface. This suggests that it is through a phenomenology of caste that

we may be able to grasp its meaning. This chimes with the observations of the philosopher Sally Haslanger, a white mother of two adopted black children. In *Resisting Reality*, Haslanger writes of racism:

it is a mistake to suggest that the ultimate source of the problem is 'in our heads' (in our conceptual scheme, our language, or our cultural ideals), or alternatively that it is in the unjust structure of our social arrangements, as if it must be one or the other; 'culture' and 'social/institutional structure' are deeply intertwined, so much so, that they are sometimes inextricable.⁴⁹

And so it is with caste. As with racial identity, caste identity is also 'largely habitual' and 'often ritualized', but, unlike racial identity, caste identity is not 'regularly unconscious'; it is rather quite overt. The difference, I think, emerges from what Ambedkar describes as a system of 'graded inequalities'. With respect to each group there is someone lower and someone higher. In this situation, caste identity may not manifest itself in the presence of those with whom there is no direct competition, and in these cases it may remain 'unconscious'; but in cases where the competition for resources is sharp, caste identity becomes overt. I agree with Haslanger that, because of our socialization as embodied subjects, 'not just rational, cognitive agents', caste identity – like race identity – is 'training the body to feel, to see, to touch, to fear, to love' in particular ways. Focus on 'the intentional is to miss the many ways that we unintentionally and unconsciously participate in racism and sexism'⁵⁰ – and, I would add, 'in casteism'.

However, any possible definition of 'caste' will be in one important respect different from Haslanger's and other definitions of 'race', to the extent that the latter focus on visible marks of skin colour. The visibility of caste is not the visibility of skin colour but of the clothed body, the body in the space of action, meaning and vulnerability – where 'being clothed' includes wearing expressions as well as being dressed, projecting a voice, carrying the smell of clothes, body odours, being armed with the tools of the trade, marked or unmarked by scars, wrinkles and other signs of toil, age, exposure to the elements, displaying or hiding one's possessions. In our clothed encounters, other bodies are first marked not by skin colour but by these identity markers that run ahead of us, as we approach each other. Our bodies reside within social spaces – it is the acting body that we see, or hear first of all, not a coloured, white, brown or black face.

Our relationship to clothes – what they mean to us – is marked by caste, class and race. It is in this sense

that caste is 'visible', when it is certainly not visible in terms of skin colour. We use social maps to orient ourselves in this saturated space, drawing inferences about people's caste on the basis of our tacit knowledge. In urban settings, people may not directly ask what someone's caste is, but they ask searching questions about the inhabited space – Where do you live? What temple/gurdwara/church do you worship in? What do your parents do? Caste is deduced from the answers to these questions.

This way of looking at caste identity has some similarity with Charles W. Mill's account of race when he writes:

Race [Caste] is not 'metaphysical' in the deep sense of being eternal, unchanging, necessary, part of the basic furniture of the universe. But race [caste] is a *contingently* deep reality that structures our particular social universe, having a social objectivity and causal significance that arises out of *our* particular history.... Because people come to think of themselves as 'raced', as black and white [as Brahmin and non-Brahmin], for example, these categories, which correspond to no natural kinds, attain a social reality. Intersubjectivity creates a certain kind of objectivity.⁵¹

Armed with the parallel between how race and caste are experienced, we can now turn to the remark of Lord Bhikhu Parekh on 22 April 2013 in the House of Lords, opposing the amendment to include caste as an aspect of race in the EA 2010:

Talking about abolishing the caste system is extremely problematic because it could mean getting rid of the category, getting rid of the hierarchy among the categories or getting rid of the principle of heredity which determines the caste. Where do you start? I suggest that caste as a category of discrimination is therefore not in the same league as race, religion or any of the other protected categories.⁵²

In one sense it is not surprising that Parekh should highlight the particularity of the category of 'caste', wanting to hold on to the identity-conferring role of caste, but denying that it could work in law as an identifiable basis of discrimination. At one level this is a continuation of the Gandhian project of saving in name an element of the Hindu tradition. For Gandhi it was *Varna*, for Parekh it is caste. For proponents of multiculturalism, misunderstanding a culture and its traditions is ironically the worst thing that can befall members of minority communities, worse even than allowing the continuation of discriminatory practices stemming from notions of superiority/inferiority intrinsically linked to caste identifications.

Parekh lists four ‘major difficulties’⁵³ that stand in the way of attempts to make caste an aspect of race for the purposes of anti-discrimination legislation, but we have a reply to each of them. First, Parekh claims that ‘there will be frivolous complaints based on caste ... Since every Indian who is Hindu carries the caste mark with him, every action that he does with respect to another can be subsumed under one or another form of caste discrimination.’ But carrying the ‘caste mark’ as a confrontational identity in the face of denigration is different from carrying it as uncritical mark of pride. The facts of the case would determine whether or not a claimant of the charge of discrimination could establish a pattern of behaviour that can be seen to manifest caste prejudice and discrimination. To imagine an eruption of frivolous complaints is merely scaremongering, not least because the cost of litigation is so high and the chances of success so low.

Second, Parekh claims that ‘once you take away the untouchability bit, there is no evidence of any kind to show that caste discrimination takes place.’ But, on the contrary, there is sufficient evidence of discrimination to warrant the inclusion of caste in the EA 2010, as the research that I have cited shows.

Third, Parekh asks ‘How do you define caste?’, implying, correctly, that this is no easy undertaking. But it is not necessary to have a definition of caste as such for the purposes of legislation, just as ‘race’ is left undefined in the EA 2010.

Finally, Parekh claims that ‘A category as indeterminate as that [of caste] does not deserve to be enshrined in domestic legislation.’ But all we need to identify caste *discrimination* is the ability to identify patterns of behaviour that would reasonably be seen as discrimination on the basis of caste by the victims of discrimination. What matters is not the meaning of the term ‘caste’ but the identification of the pattern of behaviour that can be identified as casteist.

Parekh’s misgivings about the inclusion of caste in the EA 2010 mirror the ‘nativist’ concerns. These concerns were anticipated by the chairperson of Caste-Watch UK, Satpal Muman, in 2000 whilst actively lobbying for legislation against caste discrimination. He said:

One concern that I have is this: Asians are already victims of racism in Britain. There may be a curious affect caused whereby the indigenous community may use the Caste divisions amongst the Asians as a weapon of further oppression. The Asians could be accused of in-fighting and those Asians who are fighting against Racism itself may

see their work being undermined by our outcry against Caste. Some thought ought to be given to this as to how best we can achieve our goals notwithstanding the fact there will certainly be a backlash at least from the conservative elements of the Indian community for placing Caste System in the public domain. The Right wing Fascists could also use this to further their aims.⁵⁴

Muman was right to anticipate opposition from ‘the conservative elements in the Indian community’. Just prior to the May 2015 general election, the National Council of Hindu Temples UK, the Hindu Forum of Britain and the British Sikh Consultative Forum each issued a letter, urging voters to use their vote to defeat parties supporting the legislation on caste in the UK.⁵⁵ (The NCHTUK is now accused of flouting Charity Commission guidelines in issuing electoral support for the Conservative Party.⁵⁶) But the ‘backlash’ Muman feared has also materialized in a more disturbing form than he might have imagined. The most recent statement of the deniers of caste reads:

For the avoidance of doubt, we re-iterate that the fluid and equitable, Dharmic non-hereditary, non-endogamous social structures which are repeatedly detailed in Hindu, Sikh and Jain scriptures, in no way match the Caste system which was created by the despotic medieval Popes in Europe, then exported by colonial missionaries to the Empire.⁵⁷

As the muddled spectre of Orientalism thus rises again it is worth reminding ourselves of Edward Said’s claim that the ‘disadvantaged postcolonial states and their loyalist intellectuals’ have drawn the wrong conclusion if they ‘attempt to improve, enhance, and ameliorate the images currently in circulation without doing anything to change the political situation from which they emanate’.⁵⁸ The legislation on caste discrimination is precisely an attempt to ‘do something’ to change the situation which generates the unflattering ‘image’ feared by the deniers, following Said’s recommendation that a reflective and critical ‘decentred consciousness’ should generate ‘political and practical’ activities that are ‘marginal, and oppositional with reference to the mainstream’.⁵⁹

If we want to move away from the ‘treacly pieties’ of multiculturalism⁶⁰ and its mindless celebration of branded ‘difference’ we will need to reinvigorate the ‘critical spirit’ appropriate to philosophical engagement with disturbing questions that seek to name, to understand and to find ways of eliminating the experience of unjustified discrimination.

Notes

1. Meena Dhanda et al., *Caste in Britain: Socio-Legal Review*, Research Report 91, Equality and Human Rights Commission, UK, Manchester, 2014. First published online 28 February 2014, www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/research-report-91-caste-britain-socio-legal-review. Meena Dhanda et al., *Caste in Britain: Experts' Seminar and Stakeholders' Workshop*, Research Report 92, Equality and Human Rights Commission, UK, Manchester, 2014. First published online 28 February 2014, www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/research-report-92-caste-britain-experts-seminar-and-stakeholders-workshop.
2. For a detailed background of the inclusion of caste in the Equality Act 2010, see Annapurna Waughray, 'Capturing Caste in Law: Caste Discrimination and the Equality Act 2010', *Human Rights Law Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2014, pp. 359–79; first published online 13 May 2014. See also Waughray, 'Caste Discrimination: A Twenty-First Century Challenge for UK Discrimination Law?', *Modern Law Review*, vol. 72, no. 2, 2009, pp. 182–219, the first article to discuss the legal recognition of caste as a ground for discrimination in UK law.
3. Of the 60 organizations invited, 43 sent representatives to the stakeholders' workshop in London on 9 November 2013. For details of the participating organizations, see Dhanda et al., EHRC Research Report 92.
4. Several of these organizations were invited and participated in our EHRC project workshop for stakeholders.
5. 'Response to Two Reports on Caste published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission', posted on 25 June 2014, <https://aryalegal.wordpress.com/2014/06/25/response-to-two-reports-on-caste-by-the-equality-and-human-rights-commission>; accessed 26 March 2015.
6. 'UK Caste Discrimination Legislation: Implications for Business and Employers', posted on 9 October 2014, para 17, <https://aryalegal.wordpress.com/2014/10/09/uk-caste-discrimination-legislation-implications-for-business-and-employers>; accessed 26 March 2015.
7. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1999, p. 357.
8. In 1993, I noted the limitations of the application of Kant's notion of respect to people negotiating with the powerful within a hierarchical setting of graded inequalities underpinned by caste identities. At the time when the first translations of ancient Indian scriptures were being undertaken, Kant wrote: 'Preferential tributes of respect in words and manners even to those who have no civil authority – reverences, obeisances (compliments), and courtly phrases marking with utmost precision every distinction in rank, ... a pedantry in which the Germans seem to outdo any other people in the world (except possibly the Indian castes): Does not all this prove that there is a wide spread propensity to servility in men? ... But one who makes himself a worm cannot complain afterwards if people step on him.' See Immanuel Kant *The Metaphysics of Morals*, intro., trans. and notes by Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 232. Kant's harshness towards those constrained to perform utterances marking respect for rank is striking when applied to Dalits. See Meena Dhanda, 'L'éveil des intouchables en Inde', trans. Isabelle di Natale, in Catherine Audard, ed., *Le respect: De l'estime à la déférence: une question de limite*, Éditions Autrement, Paris, Série Morales No. 10, February 1993, pp. 130–45.
9. Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third World Feminism*, Routledge, New York and London, 1997, p. 136.
10. Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY and London, 1998, p. 66.
11. Chetan Bhatt, 'Primordial Being: Enlightenment and the Indian Subject of Postcolonial Theory', in Peter Osborne and Stella Sandford, eds, *Philosophies of Race and Ethnicity*, Continuum, London and New York, 2002, pp. 40–62.
12. Kojin Karatani observes: 'Looking down on the other as an object of scientific analysis and looking up to the other as an aesthetic idol are less contradictory than complicit.' 'Uses of Aesthetics: After Orientalism', *boundary 2*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1998, p. 147. I am grateful to Alexei Penzin for drawing my attention to Karatani.
13. B.R. Ambedkar, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 32–3.
14. S. Radhakrishnan *The Principal Upaniṣads*, HarperCollins India, Noida, 2014 (1953), p. 935. I have added the square brackets to insert the transliterated Sanskrit text from the paragraph preceding the translation cited from p. 935.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 937–8.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 938.
17. Gerald D. Berreman, 'Stratification, Pluralism and Interaction: A Comparative Analysis of Caste', in Anthony de Reuck and Julie Knight, eds, *Caste and Race: Comparative Approaches*, J. & A. Churchill, London, 1967, p. 48.
18. Ambedkar, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, pp. 70, 69–70.
19. Ambedkar, 'Gandhism', in Valerian Rodrigues, ed., *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002, p. 164.
20. Gandhi, *Nava-Jivan*, 1921–2, cited in Ambedkar, *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar*, pp. 151, 151–2.
21. Gandhi, cited in *ibid.*, p. 153.
22. See Gandhi's 'Introduction to *Varnavyavastha*', *Harijan-bandhu*, 23 September 1934, in *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 3, ed. R. Iyer, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, pp. 559–65. I have discussed Gandhi's views on *Varna* in Dhanda, 'L'éveil des intouchables en Inde', and in *The Negotiation of Personal Identity*, VDM Verlag Dr Müller, Saarbrücken, 2008.
23. Anupama Rao, *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009, p. 1.
24. Ambedkar, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, pp. 32–3.
25. I recall attending a philosophy conference some thirty years ago in India in which a Bengali professor asked me my family name and that of a female colleague accompanying me. He was puzzled by my name, but it took him just a few minutes to determine that my colleague was one of the twelve highest castes of Brahmins, and in even less time he switched attention to her to compare notes about their Brahmin lineage.
26. Anticipating objections to his making the *Manusmṛiti* rather than the *Upaniṣads* into the key text that defines the philosophy of Hindus, and enlisting the support of the revolutionary and rationalist Lala Hardyal – 'The treatises are full of absurd conceits, quaint fancies, and chaotic speculations' (Cited in Ambedkar, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, p. 74) – to downplay the relevance of the *Upaniṣads* for the lived experience of Hindus, Ambedkar concludes that the *Upaniṣad* philosophy 'turned out to be most ineffective and inconsequential piece of speculation with no effect on the moral and social order of the Hindus.' (*Philosophy of Hinduism*, p. 74).
27. See *ibid.*, p. 74. Nicholas B. Dirks, 'Castes of Mind', in *Representations 37*, Special Issue: Imperial Fantasies and Postcolonial Histories, Winter 1992, pp. 56–78.
28. Dhanda, 'L'éveil des intouchables en Inde'.
29. B.R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, in *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar*, ed. Valerian Rodrigues, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010 (1936), pp. 263–305.
30. Arundhati Roy, 'The Doctor and the Saint', Introduction to B.R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, Verso, London, 2014, p. 37.
31. Guru Amar Das (SGGS 994) writes:
ਨਾ ਮੈ ਜਾਤ ਨ ਪਤਿਹ ਨਾ ਮੈ ਥੋਹ ਨ ਥਾਉ ॥
Nā mai jāṭ na paṭ hai nā mai thehu na thāo.
I have no social status or honor; I have no place or home.

- ਸਬਦੀ ਭੋਏ ਭੁਰਮੁ ਕਟਿਆ ਗੁਰੀ ਨਾਮ ਦੀਆ ਸਮਝਾਇ ॥੨॥
Sabaḍ bhed bharam katiā gur nām dīā samjhāe. ॥2॥
Pierced through by the Word [of the Shabad], my doubts
have been cut away. The Guru has inspired me to under-
stand the Naam, the Name of the Lord. ॥2॥
- Mahla 3*, Guru Amar Das, www.srigranth.org.
To understand the rebellion against the degeneration of
'original anti-casteism of Sikh culture into merely a received
glory', see Pritam Singh and Meena Dhanda, 'Sikh Culture
and Punjābiyat', in *Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies*, ed.
Pashaura Singh and Louis E. Fenech, Oxford University
Press, New York, pp. 482–92.
32. Jotiba Phule, cited by Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Visions*, Orient
Longman, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 17–18.
 33. Meena Dhanda, 'Runaway Marriages: A Silent Revolution?',
Economic and Political Weekly, vol. XLVII, no. 43, 27 October
2012, pp. 100–108.
 34. Gopal Guru, ed., *Humiliation*, Oxford University Press, New
Delhi, 2012. See also Gopal Guru and Sundar Sarukkai, *The
Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory*,
Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012.
 35. Chiefly the alternative is offered by Dipankar Gupta: 'castes
are, first and foremost, discreet entities with deep pockets
of ideological heritage. As they are discreet phenomenas
[sic], it is both logically and empirically true that there
should be multiple hierarchies as each caste always
overvalues itself', and 'no caste really thinks of itself to be
inherently inferior to any other caste'. In 'Caste and Politics:
Identity over System', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34,
2005, pp. 409–27; 412, 419. This conclusion celebrating
caste identity seems to emerge from disproportionate at-
tention to the politics of upwardly mobile castes, and does
not account for the continuing deprivation and relegation
of most Dalits to the bottommost layers of society.
 36. Balmurli Natarajan, *The Culturalization of Caste in India:
Identity and Inequality in a Multicultural Age*, Routledge,
Abingdon and New York, 2012, p. 9.
 37. Meena Dhanda, 'Eastern Punjabi Dalits: A Case Study of
Wolverhampton', paper presented jointly with Steve Taylor
and Dave Morland, British Association of South Asian
Studies annual conference, Edinburgh, 30 March–1 April
2009.
 38. See Paul Ghuman, *British Untouchable: A Study of Dalit
identity and Education*, Ashgate, Farnham, 2011; Meena
Dhanda, 'Punjabi Dalit Youth: Social Dynamics of Transi-
tions in Identity', *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 17, no. 1,
March, 2009, pp. 47–63.
 39. See Eleanor Nesbitt, 'Valmikis in Coventry: The Revival
and Reconstruction of a Community', in Roger Ballard, ed.,
Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain, C. Hurst
London, 1994, pp. 117–41; 128.
 40. Meena Dhanda, 'Certain Allegiances, Uncertain Identities:
The Fraught Struggles of Dalits in Britain', in Om Prakash
Dwivedi, ed., *Tracing the New Indian Diaspora*, Editions
Rodopi, New York, 2014, pp. 99–119.
 41. For more examples, see the government commissioned
study, H. Metcalf and H. Rolfe, *Caste Discrimination and
Harassment in Great Britain*, National Institute of Economic
and Social Research, London, 2010.
 42. Mitra Pariyar, 'Cast(e) in Bone: The Perpetuation of Social
Hierarchy among Nepalis in Britain', Working Paper No. 85,
University of Oxford, 2011.
 43. Kaveri Qureshi et al., 'Migration, Transnationalism and
Ambivalence: The Punjab–United Kingdom Linkage', in
Pirkko Pitkänen, Ahmet Ağduygu and Deniz Sert, eds,
*Migration and Transformation: Multi-level Analysis of Migrant
Transnationalism*, International Perspectives on Migration,
Dordrecht and London, 2012, p. 56.
 44. Berreman, 'Stratification, Pluralism and Interaction', p. 49.
 45. See Louise Dumont, 'Caste: A Phenomenon of Social
Structure or an aspect of Indian Culture?', in de Reuck and
Knight, eds, *Caste and Race*, p. 37.
 46. Berreman, 'Stratification, Pluralism and Interaction', p. 67.
 47. Ambedkar, *The Essential Writings*, p. 164.
 48. Berreman, 'Stratification, Pluralism and Interaction',
p. 58.
 49. Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and
Social Critique*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2012,
p. 277.
 50. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
 51. Mills, *Blackness Visible*, p. 48, my parentheses.
 52. Lord Bhikhu Parekh, House of Lords Debates, *Daily
Hansard*, 22 April 2013, column 1305, www.publications.
parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130422-0003.
htm
 53. The four difficulties are listed in Parekh, *ibid.*, Column
1305-1306. Parekh concludes that 'For these and other
reasons I would be opposed to the amendment, while
making it absolutely clear – so that I am understood outside
this House – that untouchability exists. It is an abominable
practice; people are sometimes discriminated against and
the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, at a meet-
ing he organised, produced people who were able to give
evidence. Take for instance a bus driver who happens to be
a Brahmin or whatever, and there is a person who works on
the buses who he would not want to team up with because
the guy is supposed to have a surname that indicates he
may be an untouchable. It exists in small pockets in those
places where people are recognisable. It is not a pervasive
phenomenon, but even if it is not pervasive, it is still not
acceptable. The point is that it is only one extreme form of
caste. By introducing caste as a general category in this way
one is trying to catch too much and will end up catching
too little.'
 54. Satpal Muman 'Caste in Britain', in Dalit Human Rights,
Report of the proceedings of an International Conference,
London 16–17 September 2000, organized by Voice of
Dalit International (VODI) and Dalit Solidarity Network,
published by VODI, on 10 October 2000, pp. 71–79, p. 73,
www.ambedkar.org/Worldwide_Dalits/caste_in_britain.
htm. See also the Human Rights Watch 2001 report,
Caste Discrimination: A Global Concern, www.hrw.org/
reports/2001/globalcaste/caste0801.pdf.
 55. In his letter, Satish K. Sharma, the general secretary of the
NCHT (UK) wrote: 'the Conservative Party is the only party
which has consistently listened to us and voted against the
legislation and whose members are committed to repealing
the Caste amendment if re-elected.' www.nchtuk.org;
accessed 4 May 2015. The letter was removed from the
website following announcement of a Charity Commission
investigation.
 56. See Siraj Datoo, 'Hindu Charity Investigated over Open
Letter Endorsing the Conservatives', 5th May 2015. See www.
buzzfeed.com/sirajdatoo/hindu-charity-investigated-over-
open-letter-endorsing-the-co; accessed 15 May 2015.
 57. Sharma letter; see n55.
 58. See Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Cultural
Critique* 1, Autumn 1985, pp. 89–107; 100.
 59. *Ibid.*, pp. 105–6.
 60. Gopal Balakrishnan, *Antagonistics: Capitalism and Power
in an Age of War*, Verso, London and New York, 2009,
p. 250. The phrase is from a review of Bhikhu Parekh's
book *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, and where he, Parekh, is
described as an 'eminently establishment figure' (p. 246)
who has offered 'the de-Westernization of liberalism – a
stealth liberalism' (p. 248).